

APPLICATION

FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

SPECIFICATION

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN THAT I, **JIM OWEN**, a citizen of UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have invented a new and useful **SAILING ACCESSORY** of which the following is a specification:

SAILING ACCESSORY

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

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The present invention relates to cockpit tables and organizers and more particularly pertains to a new sailing accessory for providing safe, convenient, and unobtrusive storage and mounting locations for various equipments to be accessed by the helmsman while underway.

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Description of the Prior Art

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The use of cockpit tables and organizers is known in the prior art. U.S. Patent No. 5,207,162 describes an expandable table, which may be clamped to a pedestal guard opposite of the wheel. This arrangement severely inhibits the access to the table by the helmsman. Another type of cockpit table is U.S. Patent No. 4,086,859 having a offset support for pivoting the table out of the way to allow passage through the cockpit. While this table is particularly useful when not actively underway, it inhibits normal crew activity while sailing.

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While these devices fulfill their respective, particular objectives and requirements, the need remains for a system which allows convenient safe access to various equipments by the

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helmsman without distracting the helmsman from his primary duties.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a work surface which will hold personal accessories and beverages
5 for the helmsman while the craft pitches and rolls.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Sailing provides a means for man to commune with nature in a
10 solitary manner. Sailing, especially in recreational craft, has inherent dangers second only to flying. For the solitary sailor, or the helmsman of a small recreational craft, the workload from navigation, steering, monitoring communications and the weather, can be overwhelming; and in adverse conditions, momentary
15 distractions can lead to disaster. The present invention actively assists the helmsman by providing organizational assistance, allowing the helmsman to have items of operational safety, navigation and convenience close at hand, without interfering with the operation of the craft.

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Many new production sailboats are factory equipped for pedestal (wheel) steering rather than a traditional tiller. Additionally, many more craft have been converted from tiller to pedestal steering. Pedestal steering can make a boat easier to
25 control and therefore make sailing more accessible to persons of all ages. Further, in many craft, replacement of the tiller with a pedestal steering unit can increase the usable space in the cockpit. Typical pedestal steering units include a pedestal, which is mounted to the deck of the boat, and a wheel, which is coupled to a side of
30 the pedestal near the top. The pedestal may include a mounting means for receiving a magnetic compass. Further, the pedestal unit

may include a pedestal guard, which serves to protect the compass, and provides a hand-hold for crew members. This protection is particularly desirable on boats with a mainsheet traveler just forward of the pedestal. The pedestal guard may have a straight,
5 angled, or offset configuration based upon the needs of the particular craft.

The pedestal may also serve as a mounting point for engine control assemblies utilizing either single lever or multiple lever
10 controls. An illustrative example of a multiple lever control assembly may include a clutch lever (forward / reverse) and a throttle lever (fast / slow).

Typical examples of this type of pedestal steering system include
15 those manufactured by Edson International, 146 Duchaine Blvd, New Bedford, MA 02745-1292 (edsonmarine.com).

The present invention provides multiple advantages over the patents previously noted including, but certainly not limited to
20 accessibility by the helmsman, ease of mounting, and user configurablity.

To this end, the present invention generally comprises a top member and a bottom member. The top member includes a slot
25 which extends therethrough. The slot is designed for receiving a top portion of a pedestal guard. The top member defines a work surface. The bottom member is operationally coupled to the top member. The bottom member includes a front edge designed for abutting a back side of the pedestal guard.

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There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto.

The objects of the invention, along with the various features of novelty which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be better understood and objects other than those set forth above will become apparent when consideration is given to the following detailed description thereof. Such description makes reference to the annexed drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a schematic perspective view of a new sailing accessory according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is a schematic perspective exploded view of the present invention.

Figure 3 is a schematic top view of the top member of the present invention.

Figure 4 is a schematic top view of the bottom member of the present invention.

Figure 5 is a schematic front view of the present invention.

Figure 6 is a schematic side view of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

5 With reference now to the drawings, and in particular to Figures 1 through 6 thereof, a new sailing accessory embodying the principles and concepts of the present invention and generally designated by the reference numeral 10 will be described.

10 As best illustrated in Figures 1 through 6, the sailing accessory 10 generally a top member 20 and a bottom member 40. The top member 20 includes a slot 22, which extends therethrough. The slot 22 is designed for receiving a top portion of a pedestal guard 2. The top member 20 defines a work surface. The bottom member 40 is operationally coupled to the top member 20. The bottom member 40 includes a front edge 42 designed for abutting a back side of the pedestal guard 2.

20 In an embodiment the slot 22 includes arcuate ends 24 for increasing a surface area of the top member 20 in contact with the pedestal guard 2.

25 Preferably a pair of notches 44 is positioned in the front edge 42 of the bottom member 40. Each one of the notches 44 is for receiving a back side of a rail of the pedestal guard 2. The notches 44 increase a surface area of the bottom member 40 contacting the pedestal guard 2.

30 In a preferred embodiment, a pair of apertures 26,28 extends through the top member 20. Each one of the apertures 26,28 is designed for receiving a beverage container. Each one of the

apertures 26,28 is positioned through an associated side of the top member 20 behind the pedestal guard 2 when the system 10 is installed on the pedestal guard 2.

5 In a further embodiment, a bore 30 also extends through the top member 20. The bore 30 is preferably positioned adjacent to the slot 22, for selectively receiving a piece of accessory equipment for ready access by the user.

10 In yet a further embodiment, a secondary slot 32 extends through the top member 20. The secondary slot 32 is preferably positioned centrally adjacent to a front edge of the top member 20. The secondary slot 32 is positioned in front of the pedestal guard 2 when the system 10 is installed on the pedestal guard 2.

15 In a preferred embodiment, four spacer members 50 are used to operationally couple the top member 20 to the bottom member 40. The first spacer member is positioned adjacent a first front corner of the top member 20. The second spacer member is
20 positioned adjacent a second front corner of the top member 20. The third spacer member is positioned adjacent a first rear corner of the top member 20. The fourth spacer member is positioned adjacent a second rear corner of the top member 20. Further four
25 spacer bores 34 extend through the top member 20. Each one of the four spacer bores 34 is aligned with an associated one of the four
30 spacer members 50. Four securing members 56 are used to couple the top member 20 to the spacer members 50. Each one of the four securing members 56 is positionable within an associated one of the four spacer bores 34. Similarly, four bottom spacer bores 46
30 extend through the bottom member 40. Each one of the four bottom

spacer bores 46 is aligned with an associated one of the four spacer members 50. Finally, four bottom securing members 60 are used to couple the bottom member 40 to the four spacer members 50. Each one of the four bottom securing members 60 is positionable through
5 an associated one of the four bottom spacer bores 46.

In still a further embodiment, each one of the four securing members 56 is uniquely associated with one of the four spacer bores 34, one of the four spacer members 50, and one of the four bottom
10 spacer bores 46. The four spacer members 50 each are substantially hollow. A tensioning member 65 may be coupled to an end of each one of the securing members 56 to facilitate selectively locking the securing member 56 in a static position relative to the top member 20 and the bottom member 40.

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In yet a further embodiment the top member 20 includes an overall width of approximately 18 inches and an overall length of approximately 14 inches.

20 In even still a further embodiment each one of the pair of apertures 26,28 includes a diameter of approximately 4 inches.

The system 10 may include a communications and navigation equipment console 70 operationally coupled to the top member 20.
25 The communications and navigation equipment console 70 is for receiving communication, navigation, and identification equipment. The communication and navigation equipment console 70 is adjacent a front edge of the top member 20. The system may also operate with a communication and navigation equipment console
30 provided by the user independent of the present system.

With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

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Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

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